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# EDUCATIONAL

IN CHARGE OF  
ISABEL HAMPTON ROBB

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## PRELIMINARY TRAINING IN THE LONDON HOSPITAL

By EVA C. E. LÜCKES  
Matron London Hospital

IN these days, when so much is written about hospital nurses, and so many are seen in our midst, it may interest some of our readers to learn of a comparatively new departure which has taken place in the well-known London Hospital Training-School. It was observed that the first plunge of the new probationer into hospital life was a somewhat overwhelming experience. The most courageous novice could scarcely help feeling bewildered when she found herself arrayed in unfamiliar uniform, and realized that she was an insignificant unit among the two hundred and fifty or three hundred nurses with whom she had chosen to begin her nursing career. In a hospital containing about eight hundred beds the work of the day is necessarily the first consideration, and the well-meaning stranger found herself comparatively useless until a few weeks had accustomed her to the routine, and she had made one or two friends among her fellow-workers. Moreover, it was by no means easy to ascertain in such conditions how far the candidate was fitted to become a nurse, or for those under whom she served to arrive at an accurate conclusion on this important point during the trial month which probationers undergo before being definitely accepted for training. Slowness, for instance, might be due to mere ignorance of the unaccustomed life and surroundings, in which case the defect would soon be remedied, or it might be due to innate want of capacity on the part of the probationer, and then all efforts to instil a knowledge of nursing would be a waste of time, and would fail to make her a really good nurse.

The committee of the London Hospital, therefore, decided to take a house (Tredegar House, 99 Bow Road, E.) and to furnish it for the purpose of receiving twenty-eight selected candidates, free of charge, for periods of seven weeks, previous to transferring to the hospital those

found sufficiently suitable to enter upon the usual month's trial. It is not generally known that at the London Hospital Training-School there are vacancies for twenty-eight probationers every seven weeks, and occasionally a few extra vacancies if selected candidates fail.

The Preliminary Training-Home is an immense gain to us in the wards, as well as to the pupil-probationers, who get the advantage of the careful preparation given there to qualify them for their subsequent experience in the hospital.

Twenty-eight selected candidates arrive at Tredegar House on a fixed Saturday for a period of seven weeks. On Monday morning they come to the hospital for a lecture on elementary hygiene and a demonstration in sick-room cookery, returning to Tredegar House to dinner. The rest of the day is filled up by various classes and off-duty time, some classes numbering ten probationers and some only five. These classes are given by sisters specially selected for the purpose, as well as by the sister in charge of Tredegar House. Each pupil-probationer has her own time-table for every day, and this is strictly adhered to throughout.

We endeavor to make this training thoroughly practical, as well as sound in theory. In addition to the lectures on elementary hygiene, physiology, and anatomy given at the hospital by members of the staff, instruction classes are held in various nursing details. Bandaging, splint padding, bedmaking, how to take and chart temperatures, the method of keeping reports of special cases, the names of instruments in common use, how to read measure-glasses, hypodermic syringes, etc., etc., are all carefully taught, and care is taken, as far as may be, to see that each probationer has mastered these rudimentary details. This insures a probationer being taught *from the very first* the correct method of doing all elementary nursing duties. They are taught everything we can think of as likely to smooth the way for a beginner, and to make her of some little use from the moment she enters the wards. They learn also how to sweep and dust, to wash up tea-things, etc. There is no heavy work among these domestic duties, but, unfortunately, a knowledge of them does not come by instinct to every woman, as is sometimes imagined, and a nurse would not be worth much to her patient if she could not make his surroundings clean and comfortable in a quiet and efficient manner. Please do not think we are under the delusion that every pupil-probationer becomes perfect in these respects while she is at Tredegar House, but she has the *opportunity* of doing so, and the importance of *good nursing habits*, in little ways too often overlooked, is carefully inculcated by every means that we can think of. During the six weeks, courses of twelve lectures on every

subject taught are fitted in, and a part of the seventh week is taken up in examinations. The probationers have a day off on Thursday of that week, and are transferred to the hospital for a month's trial on Friday, and then, for the first time, they enter the wards. Tredegar House is then prepared for a fresh set of pupil-probationers on the following Saturday, and history repeats itself, with an occasional break for holidays, throughout the year.

Directly it becomes evident that any pupil-probationer is hopelessly unsuitable for hospital work, of course she returns to her friends. Doubtful probationers are usually kept to the end of the Tredegar House period if there is a reasonable hope that they will improve, and we frequently stretch a point in favor of still doubtful candidates, and give them a final trial in the hospital. Miss Stirling Hamilton, the sister in charge of Tredegar House, takes the greatest interest in her work, and the pupil-probationers are devoted to her. It is impossible to have twenty-eight people living together for six or seven weeks, under precisely similar conditions, without an experienced observer getting a fair idea of their respective characters. The judgment formed by the sister in charge of Tredegar House is of great service to me when I have subsequently to decide from the reports of the various sisters under whom the probationers begin their hospital careers how far each candidate is suitable to enter upon her four-years' engagement. Before we had this Preliminary Training-School, it was often extremely difficult to form an accurate judgment as to a probationer's capabilities. Every new probationer cannot be placed under a sister who happens to be a good judge of character, and sometimes the pressure of work in our busy wards is enough to excuse a sister for not having paid a great deal of attention to a probationer too new and inexperienced to be of much use. If some months pass before it is ascertained that a probationer has no aptitude for nursing, this represents loss to the *hospital*, for we have to manufacture our own trained nurses entirely. A probationer who fails may have gained *something* from her comparatively brief hospital experience, but *we* lose the valuable time we have expended in a vain endeavor to make her a trained nurse, and have to commence the process over again with another beginner.

#### FROM CIRCULAR SENT TO APPLICANTS.

"The training given at Tredegar House to probationers costs the London Hospital no less than one thousand pounds a year. The committee of the hospital feel that they are bound to protect themselves from giving this training to applicants who either do not really mean to enter the hospital—but who, nevertheless, profess their intention of signing the agreement for four years, if approved—or who, having had the Tredegar-House training, change their

minds and desire to leave. The committee are, therefore, compelled to require every applicant to give the name of someone who will be responsible in a fine of ten pounds if she, *of her own accord*, break her agreement, or withdraws after leaving the Preliminary Training-School. This must not be understood as condoning the breach of faith such conduct involves, but merely as a protection that the hospital funds shall not suffer by such withdrawal, which, happily, very rarely occurs."

## IN MEMORIAM

[The following poem was written for the dedication of the Isabella Graham Hart Memorial Home for Nurses of the Rochester City Hospital, Rochester, New York, by the Rev. J. T. Ely. An illuminated copy hangs under the portrait of Mrs. Hart in the spacious and beautifully decorated hall of the building.—ED.]

"A GRACIOUS presence fills these halls,  
A voice of gentleness recalls  
One whose sweet ways of doing good  
Were like a new beatitude.  
Her smile was blessing, and her heart  
With all who suffered had its part,  
While deeds of kindness marked the  
way  
She trod in secret day by day.  
So gently planned, so kindly thought,  
So modestly were all things wrought,  
Hiding the giver in the gift,  
That only through some tell-tale rift  
Streamed forth the shining of her face  
To lend each gift its choicest grace.

"The 'angel of the house' she moved  
In ministry for those she loved;  
And calling back her presence bright,  
With all its effluence of light,  
E'en through our tears—thou vanished one,  
Whose path by ours no more may  
run—  
We joy to think what earth can give  
To make it blessedness to live.

"And ye who enter through these  
doors,  
Dwell in these rooms, and tread these  
floors,  
Think sometimes in your work of love

Of her who watches from above;  
And as ye soothe the throb of pain,  
Or give the weary hope again,  
Or bear the fret of hopeless ill,  
Or help the helpless to be still,  
Think how amid the angel throng  
A brighter joy, a sweeter song,  
May still be hers, to feel that here  
Her love, through you, from year to  
year,  
In ministry that shall not end,  
May still the suffering world befriend.

"Our hearts were dull to disbelieve  
That heaven itself may joy receive  
From deeds of kindness done on earth  
Which in that higher realm have  
birth.

We do not know, we cannot tell,  
How to that world invisible  
Our world is joined; but still we  
know

The two most sweetly interflow,  
And treading ways of service here,  
The spirits of that holier sphere  
May still attend us in our round,  
With us in one communion bound.  
Her memory thus may blessing give  
Here where her name enshrined shall  
live,  
And she in that world win new bliss  
From love that ministers in this."